

Local Testimony

In **Support** of the inclusion of “expanding language access”
Johnson County Board of County Commissioners
November 20th, 2025

My name is Logan DeMond, and I am the Director of Policy and Research at the American Civil Liberties Union of Kansas. The ACLU of Kansas is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization with more than 35,000 supporters across Kansas that works to preserve and strengthen the civil rights and liberties of every person in our state. On behalf of the ACLU of Kansas, I am writing to express our support of the subsection titled “Fair and Transparent Civic Processes” on the proposed 2026 Legislative Platform, specifically the inclusion of “expanded language access.”

We strongly support the inclusion of “expanded language access.” We also encourage the Board of County Commissioners to mention specific steps that can be taken to give this phrase meaning. Supporting the expansion of language access is about making it easier for eligible citizens to fulfill their patriotic duty and fully participate in our elections. It is important to define what it looks like in practice to provide additional voting materials in Spanish: translated registration forms and instructions, polling place information, materials about Johnson County elections and the right to receive language assistance at the polls, or even ballots and sample ballots. There are countless specific, low- and no-cost measures the Board of County Commissioners could support.

More than anything, we applaud the Commission for providing Johnson County residents with the reassurance that their elected officials support the inclusion and full participation of all eligible citizens, which sends a powerful message in a time of uncertainty and unprecedented threats to our democracy. Johnson County is a diverse community with more than 87,000 residents, including more than 39,000 citizens of voting age, who speak a primary language other than English. Making voting easier in other languages ensures all eligible Kansans are able to exercise their constitutional right to vote and ensures that voters fully comprehend what they are voting on and are making informed decisions. Every eligible Kansan, no matter where you come from, what language you speak, or what party you belong to, has a right to vote that is guaranteed by the Constitution. But when we tell eligible citizens that they can either vote in a language they don’t fully understand or sit out the election completely, our constitutional democracy isn’t working for everyone. As you consider supporting the legislative platform before you, I urge you to take these factors into consideration.

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